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ACUTA eNews November 1990, Vol. 19, No. 11

ACUTA NEWS

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Association of College & University Telecommunications Administrators Inc.

THE VOICE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 1990

Accessing information is key to management

"Look for ways you can be more useful to your university," Connie Pottenger told attendees of ACUTA's Fall Seminar in Portland, Oregon.

While the campus Telecommunications Administrator is concerned initially with maintaining a voice and data network and keeping within a budget, the elements for managing that network can also be effective tools in overall campus management, Pottenger discovered as Telecommunications Director at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI).

"One day," she related, "my boss came to me and said: "I want you to elevate the status of the Telecommunications Department, move it to a higher plane of operation *and* produce an additional million dollars of revenue."

She was to do all this without spending any more money from the university than already provided in her budget.

Student resale, an attractive

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Package links switch with user's computer

The first application of a software system linking a telephone company central-office switch and a customer's premise-based computer will support an enhanced emergency response service at Syracuse University.

Northern Telecom announced the new software package, called CompuCALL, at a New York City news conference Nov. 5. Developed in collaboration with IBM, the package will enable any Northern Telecom DMS SuperNode or DMS-100 to interface with an IBM AS/400 minicomputer on a user's premise.

CompuCALL will enhance central office-based Automatic Call Distribution (ACD), Northern Telecom said in a news release, by automatically routing customer calls to the first available operator.

The link to a call center's computer also can identify the

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ACUTA President Bill Orrick opened the Fall Seminar by introducing as a panel the ACUTA members who would give case studies of their experience with Telecommunications Management Information Systems. From left are: Ruth Michaleckl, Univ. of Nebraska, Chris Moore, Oregon State Univ., Sue Fisher, Univ. of Connecticut, Kathi Johnson, Yale Univ., Randy Collett, Southwest Missouri State, and Richard Stock, Virginia Tech.

Connecticut College: a 'Campus of the Future'

Connecticut College has become the nation's first liberal arts college to be designated a "Campus of the Future" by AT&T and SNET Systems.

The designation means the college has installed a campus-wide telecommunications infrastructure capable of handling voice, data and video communication on copper, co-axial and fiber optic cables. Work on the $3 million project began in March and by August, every room on campus was outfitted with new three-way ports.

Officials from the college, AT&T and SNET Systems formally announced the Campus of the Future designation in a Nov. 1 ceremony. Models of the college's telecommunications systems, as well as fiber optic wiring models were on display for the event. Speaking at the announcement,

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Nominations sought for 5 Regional Directors

By Michael Grunder
Immediate Past President
Yale University
Northeast Region

The ACUTA Bylaws call for the election of Regional Directors with each to serve for a two-year term. The Bylaws go on to require that the Regional Directors "must be employed by an institutional member located in their respective regions." Terms of office begin on June 1 and "Regional Directors may serve consecutive terms (if re-elected)."

The procedure set up by the Board of Directors to oversee the election calls for nominations to be requested from the membership in the November issue of the ACUTA News. The deadline for receiving nominations is "the end of the business day on the second Monday of the following January," in this case 5 p.m. ET, Jan. 14, 1991.

Upon receipt of nominations, "The Chair of the Nominating Committee will contact each individual nominated to explain in detail the responsibilities and time requirements of a Regional Director and confirm the individual's willingness to serve." The nomination and election procedure goes on to state that "Institutional support from the individual's school is also necessary." (Please note: The requirement precludes write-in ballots during the election.)

Nomination deadline is Jan. 14; ballots to be mailed in February.

In January, the Board will approve the slate of nominees and ballots will be mailed to the membership in each Region in February. Results of the election will be presented to the Board no later than April 1.

As this is the first election of Regional Directors, the procedure states that the "Call for nominations in 1990 will be to elect all Regional Directors, with Directors from even-numbered Regions initially serving one-year terms and those from odd-numbered Regions serving two-year terms. All subsequent elections will be for two-year terms.

Based on the above guidelines, please submit nominations for Regional Director from your region – in writing – to:

Michael Grunder
Yale Telecom. Dept.
PO Box 4568 Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520

Nominations should include your name and signature along with the nominee's name, title, college or university and telephone number.

Nominations can be faxed: (203) 432-7419

Sorry, no Bitnet nominations will be accepted.

In all cases, receipt of your nominations will be acknowledged. If acknowledgement is not received after a reasonable period, call (203) 432-2001.

Remember, the deadline for all nominations is 5 p.m. on Jan. 14, 1991.

One final note, please keep in mind that ACUTA has five regions, as listed below. One Regional Director will be elected from each.

Northeast (Region 1): Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Southeast (Region 2): Alabama, Delaware, Dist. of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

Midwest (Region 3): Arkansas, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin.

West (Region 4): Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Canada (Region 5).

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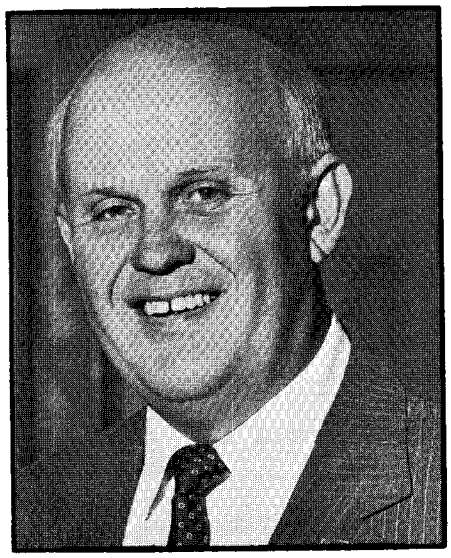


MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

F. William Orrick, Washington University in St. Louis

People were skeptical several years ago when I proposed having a Fall Seminar in Portland, Oregon.

Fall seminars are usually our least well attended events, and Portland is a long way from many of our members.

The combination of a super program and the magnificent beauty of the Pacific Northwest, however, managed to draw approximately 200 total attendees (129 paid seminar attendees) to Portland, a record for an ACUTA Fall Seminar.

When you see majestic Mt. Hood and the beautiful Cascade range or the breath-taking vistas of the Columbia River Gorge, you understand why the pioneers drove covered wagons across the plains and over the Rockies to reach the Oregon Territory.

- *ACUTA News* is published 11 times a year. The next issue to be published will be January, 1991.
- The deadline for the early registration for the Spring Seminar in Ft. Lauderdale is Dec. 14. Registrations postmarked by that date receive a $50 discount.
- ACUTA's address has changed slightly. Send correspondence to Lexington Financial Center, Suite 2420, 250 W. Main, Lexington, KY 40507.

The seminar topic, Telecommunications Management Information Systems, addressed the central role that we as telecommunications administrators must play in higher education if our institutions are to make the most of the "information age." With the volume of information multiplying, effective management is necessary to make all this information useful. Without proper management, all that information is worse than useless, it becomes a bewildering blizzard.

We learned from the "Success Stories" told by members that a telecommunications administrator can rise in the management structure of an institution when top managers discover that the elements of good telecommunications management can be essential tools in general campus management.

The speakers in Portland were all ACUTA members who shared from their own experiences. Everyone did a superb job. Hats off to all who participated.

Something new at Portland was a "Marketplace Update" by vendors who were exhibiting products and services directly related to the seminar topic. Both vendors and attendees found this addition to the program interesting and useful. A similar segment is planned for the Ft. Lauderdale program. This is another way of realizing more from the partnership between vendors and institutions that ACUTA began several years ago when vendors were first invited to exhibit at our events.

Our corporate affiliates as well as individual representatives from the telecommunications industry contribute a great deal to the educational experience of our seminars and conferences. You are not getting the full benefit of attendance unless you take the time to learn all that you can from the exhibitors.

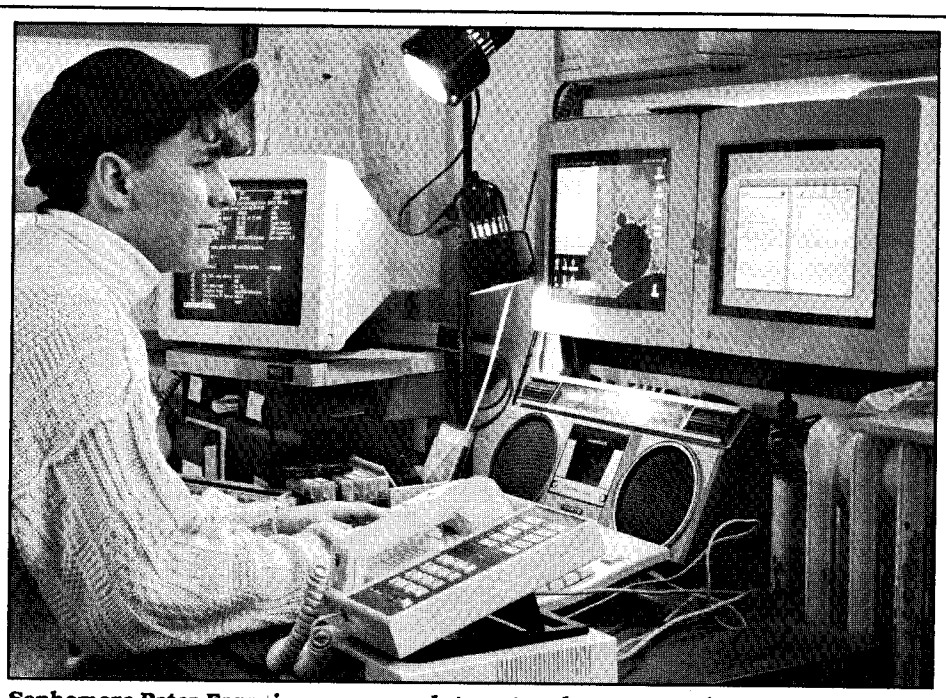
Speaking of Ft. Lauderdale, this will be my last column before we convene on the South Florida coast, Jan 13-16. Voice Messaging and Voice Response are among the most innovative and frequently used applications in telecommunications. We are fortunate to have one of the foremost authorities on Voice Processing, Donald Van Doren, to speak on this topic in January.

An example of how telecommunications is becoming more important to other campus departments is Touchtone Registration. We have had several members write in the newsletter over the past year about the success of Touchtone Registration on their campuses. In the 1970s, computers began taking some of the headache out of registration. Now, telecommunications can join with computers to make registration a breeze.

Share your Winter Seminar brochure with your campus registrar and invite him or her to accompany you to Ft. Lauderdale.

On the facing page is an article about the upcoming election of Regional Directors. The Board of Directors is ACUTA's policy-making body. This is your chance to help guide the future of ACUTA by nominating and then voting for candidates with the vision, leadership and commitment to keep ACUTA on the path of increased growth and improved service to the membership.

Please give serious thought to this matter and send letters of nomination to Mike Grunder at Yale University. Then, be ready to vote when ballots are mailed out in February.



Sophomore Peter Francis accesses a data network at Connecticut College.

Campus of the Future

(Continued from page 1)

Tom Makofske, Director of Computer and Information Services at Connecticut College, praised the institution's trustees and administration for their vision and thanked SNET Systems and AT&T for their support.

"This project establishes Connecticut College as a national leader in college telecommunications systems and will offer our faculty and students the opportunity to prepare for the next decade and beyond," said Richard Schneller, vice chair of the college's board of trustees and the board's representative on the telecommunications committee. "The new system will benefit every member of the college community and will allow the college to take advantage of technological advances in computing and telecommunications," Schneller said.

To celebrate the new system, Stephen Jay Gould, one of America's foremost paleontologists, addressed students on the evening of Nov. 1. The acclaimed author of books and essays on evolution and scientific history, is known for his innovative thought on evolution.

The project links faculty, students and administrators on one network and provides each with full access to the wide range of telephone services, computing services and systems, the automated library catalog, voice mail and network services.

Under the new system, an annual $250 fee is charged to students, providing a telephone in each room that will allow unlimited local and campus calling at no extra charge, access to a data network, free voice messaging for all students and emergency security speed calling. The new service will also provide long distance service at a lower rate than was available to students.

Each phone has a special code for speed dialing campus safety, with the caller's location displayed on a console in the campus safety office. Information displayed on the console can list a student's name and room number.

Students are able to access a voice messaging network through the new system. A voice mail feature allows messages to be sent to multiple locations and stored until retrieved. For example, a professor could send a message to each student in class, or a security alert could be sent to every dorm room.

A data port hook-up for PCs will be installed in each dorm room as well as all administrative and faculty offices. These will provide access to the academic minicomputer network, computing laboratories, electronic mail, the automated library catalog and public data base services without a modem. The system also ties into an international electronic mail network. The data system, planned for installation in the spring of 1991, will be a high speed network implemented on fiber optics, available to every building on campus.

The wiring plan will eventually provide for a full campus video network, which would give the campus access to internationally or locally produced programming, on-campus programming and distribution as well as full-motion video to all wired locations. This will also be available in common rooms and dormitory lounges.

After more than two years of study and a bidding process that lasted more than a year, SNET Systems was selected as the vendor of choice. Vendors were evaluated based on a list of criteria which included: system features, reputations and reliability of the company, price, long-term maintenance costs, readily available service and the appropriateness of the proposed solution to meet the college's needs.

A consulting firm, Telecommunications Services Inc., of Waterford, CT, assisted the college in planning and negotiating the contract and will continue to assist with installation of the system,.

In addition to lower costs, the new system will offer significant advantages over the existing telephone and data network now being used by the college faculty and administration, Makofske explained. The upgrade will allow expansion of the system into several buildings, which currently have no more available lines.

Regarding aggregator status and rules

ICA backs universities' position before FCC

Citing the interests of its university members, the International Communications Association (ICA) has filed a response to the Federal Communications Commission's *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* FCC 90-231.

The proposed FCC rule would classify universities, which sell long distance service to students and others, as "call aggregators." Under the new rule, aggregators would be prevented from blocking certain types of dialing access.

The costs of modifying existing PBX equipment within 18 months to comply with the proposed requirement to provide 800, 950 and 1-0-XXX-0+ access would place a heavy and unjustified burden on institutions of higher education, the ICA argued.

"The record ... is devoid of any evidence of substantial cause for subjecting universities to the proposed AOS (alternative operator service) rules, the response said.

"By aggregating the long-distance traffic of its students, faculty, staff and guests with the institution's own traffic," the ICA pointed out, "a university can provide long distance service at competitive rates.

Call aggregation drives down long-distance rates for university research and administration, the association's response noted. Any regulation reducing the aggregate volume could easily "result in higher tuition costs for students and research costs for sponsoring agencies, particularly the federal government," it added.

The proposed new rulemaking originated from a petition by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). In a survey by NARUC, 80 percent of those responding had received complaints involving hotel/motel phones. "And fully-two thirds reported receiving complaints concerning customer-owned coin operated telephones."

Only about one agency in 10, however, reported receiving any complaints about university telephones. Similarly, only one of every 10 non-regulatory agencies said they had received complaints about university phones, said the ICA, citing NARUC's own survey.

There are a variety of reasons why so few complaints have been filed regarding university long distance services, the response continued.

Cultivating a positive, long-term relationship with students and other members of the academic community is in a university's own interest, the ICA pointed out. In addition, "non-profit institutions place their tax-exempt status at risk to the extent that they 'mark up' the cost of long distance service." Rates charged by university hospitals and medical centers are also subject to scrutiny by Medicare and Medicaid authorities.

As far as ICA was able to determine, only two commenters had advocated treating colleges and universities as call aggregators. These were two men who challenged Stanford University's practice of not allowing campus residents to choose Pacific Bell local exchange service and did not provide 950, 10-XXX, or Dial 1 access to the long distance provider of the residents' choice.

They did not mention 800 access to long distance carriers, which Stanford has always made available to its customers.

This challenge, first taken before the California Public Utility Commission, was dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. But the commission did conclude that "the rates charged by Stanford compare favorably with Pacific Bell's."

In addition, Stanford this summer ceased blocking 950 access on campus.

Stanford has not opened up 10-XXX-0, the ICA response said, "because the rates charged by long-distance carriers for operator assisted calls are substantially higher than those available via 800, 950 or O+."

After conducting an independent investigation on behalf of the FCC, the accounting firm of

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ACUTA Calendar

• Winter Seminar •
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
Jan. 13-16, 1991

HOTEL: Bahia Mar Resort

TOPIC: Voice Messaging and Voice Response

• Spring Seminar •
Honolulu, Hawaii
April 5-9, 1991

HOTEL: Hyatt Regency Waikiki

TOPIC: Strategic Telecom Applications in Higher Education

• Summer Conference •
St. Louis, Mo.
July 7-11, 1991

HOTEL: Adams Mark Hotel

TOPIC: Management, Regulatory Issues, Professional Growth, Voice, Data and Video

• Fall Seminar •
Denver, Colo.
Sept. 15-18, 1991

HOTEL: Hyatt Denver

TOPIC: Student Services

Management

(Continued from page 1)

option at many institutions, was not possible at IUPUI, an urban, commuter campus without residence halls.

Pottenger began her ambitious assignment by having herself and her staff immerse themselves in the activities of the university. "Whenever an appropriate campus committee met, a Telecom Department representative was present," she said. "Whenever a department head held a general meeting, we had someone there, and we listened.

"We wanted to know what our customers expected of us and what we could find in our resources that could help the various branches of our university do their jobs better.

At one of those many meetings she and her staff were attending, the campus vice chancellor said he wanted "innovative and creative solutions to campus service delivery and network access problems."

The academic mission of IUPUI includes a major commitment to supporting teaching, learning and research with the most up to date technology. This includes electronic classrooms, portable electronic technology, distance learning and the library of the future.

Faculty members, however, were reluctant to embrace advanced technologies for teaching and learning, the chancellor explained.

"Here's what a faculty member faces," he pointed out, "if he or she wants to make use of available technology in a teaching environment."

- A program has to be developed
- A room has to be scheduled
- Audio visual and/or computer equipment has to be ordered

If service or support is needed, there are several different numbers to call.

"Just the physical acts required for teaching with technology took so much time and effort that many professors didn't think it was worth it," Pottenger explained. "Especially if they got to class and found that there were not enough chairs or a mess that somebody had left from a previous class. Who do you call for furniture and clean up?"

After hearing the chancellor outline the problem, Pottenger knew her department could provide a large measure of the solution: coordination access information service.

Seminar attendees crowded around Dennis Fouty (seated) and Ruth Michalecki of the Univ. of Nebraska to further discuss their presentation on TMIS at their campus.

"That meeting ended at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon," she recalled. "We had just installed a voice mail system, and by 8 o'clock the next morning I had activated the automated attendant and programmed "4 - HELP."

Callers seeking "help" would receive a voice menu from which they could choose the type of help needed – computing center, learning technology, telecommunications, housekeeping, graphic reproductions, mail services, food services, campus activities, etc.

And of course, Pottenger added, the caller could always "bail out" by pressing "0."

"The next morning when the vice chancellor got to his office, I called and asked him to pick up the phone and dial "4 - HELP." When he got the help menu and pressed "T" for telecommunications, he got my office," she recounted.

"He was thrilled that overnight we could chip away at the problem."

That gave Pottenger an opportunity to explain "my next idea, a campus help and information desk utilizing automatic call distribution."

All requests for help or information, including service order requests and trouble reports for all campus services and technology groups could be centralized and streamlined.

This was the birth of an idea that IUPUI calls its Campus Facility Information Management System (C-FIMS).

C-FIMS ultimately will eliminate duplication of effort by various departments who perhaps unwittingly had been doing the same things. It also will reduce service response time.

Pottenger's next call was to Telecommunications Data Systems, the vendor who would develop a Telecommunications Facilities Management System for IUPUI. "We began plans to offer partitioned TFMS modules for sale to other campus groups who could use improved methods of service order processing, trouble reporting, billing, general ledger interface, directory services and other management reports."

Pottenger had become "pretty smug until one night catastrophe struck." Two days before Christmas that year the *high* temperature was minus 18 degrees. That night the electric power substation serving the Ronald McDonald House for the families of critically ill children blew up. All of the children and their parents had to be transferred in the middle of the night to a hotel.

"My boss happened to be the administrator on call that night. At about 3 a.m., he realized that physical plant records were difficult to access, delaying recovery.

He called me first thing in the morning and asked if the Campus Facilities Information Management system could be expanded to physical plant to cover wiring, plumbing, buildings, streets, sidewalks and grounds?

"He never, ever wanted to be

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ACUTA's Vendor Liaison Committee, made up of representatives from industry, higher education and the ACUTA staff, met prior to the opening of the Fall Seminar in Portland, Oregon.

Vendors seek enhanced communication with higher education market via ACUTA

If the corporate affiliates of ACUTA would change anything about the organization, it would be to cultivate even more the productive interchange between "institution and institution, institution and vendor as well as between vendor and vendor."

This consensus was expressed at the first meeting of the ACUTA's Vendor Liaison Committee since its organization at the 19th Annual Conference in Orlando this past July. In a session just prior to the Fall Seminar in Portland, Oregon, members of the committee discussed ways of building on the still-young relationship between ACUTA and the telecommunications industry.

Vendors want to be seen by higher education as a "resource" and not "just as suppliers," the business people said. "We hope you see us as sources of information and not just as sales people," one member pointed out.

Representatives of industry also could be a valuable source of information in the selection of ACUTA seminar and conference topics, they added. Vendors could also be called upon to give objective presentations at ACUTA events about new technologies and applications, they volunteered.

ACUTA executive director Del Combs said in the case of some new technologies, vendors might be the best, if not the only source of information.

ACUTA could render a valuable service to vendors by providing training sessions for them as well as institutional members. Topics could focus on presentation and marketing techniques as well as the needs of the higher education and general institutional market, it was suggested.

The industry representatives welcomed an innovation tried in Portland, the Marketplace Update/Vendor Forum. They were glad to learn that it would be continued in Ft. Lauderdale in January.

Vendors also would find their participation in future Birds of a Feather sessions a learning experience, several said. Some orientation for attendees from higher education, especially first timers, on how best to make use of the exhibits might be worthwhile.

A forum for telecommunications professionals to speak directly to vendors formally outlining the needs of higher education and what their institutions expect from industry, also would be a helpful addition to some future programs.

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Industry Members Vendor Liaison Committee

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Paula Loendorf
Exec. Vice President

Coleman Burton
Vice President

Joseph Mantione
Director, Northeast Region

Del Combs
Executive Director

Kellie Bowman
Staff and Events Coordinator

Voice mail ends phone tag, provides aid to learning

By Cindy Adams
Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Midwest Region

We were experiencing the usual problems expected on a campus with 46,200 students, faculty and staff.

- A large number of calls were going unanswered.
- A seemingly unending game of telephone tag was going on between faculty, staff, student body and outside callers.
- Receptionists and staff were beginning to suffer burnout from the high volume of messages they were required to take each day.

About two years ago, we began assessing the needs of the various departments to determine the voice processing capabilities that would best serve the campus. We discovered that the number of answering machines being purchased was skyrocketing, and several departments already were looking to voice processing vendors for solutions to their communications problems. Two departments had even purchased PC-based systems which produced excellent results. But a centralized solution would be more cost-effective and easier to manage, we felt.

We in the Office of Telecommunications set about to educate ourselves on the technology. We read everything we could find on the good and bad experiences of other universities. And we listened closely to people on our campus to make sure we knew what they needed.

A campus-wide survey showed that we needed to provide the works – voice messaging, audiotex, telephone answering and call processing – at an affordable cost to all departments.

After evaluating equipment from several vendors, we chose a Voicemail II system from Voicemail International because it could handle all of our requirements and keep pace with expected growth as our applications expand.

We then entered an intensive learning period, involving a lot of trial and error in the creation of applications. Specific goals were set for the functionality and user friendliness of each application, and we conducted tests to ensure that those goals were met.

The automation of our Graduate College telephone network was our first, and most successful program. Before installing voice processing equipment, the Graduate College receptionist was screening calls and transferring 80 to 85 percent of the total call volume to other departments on campus. The result was a major telephone bottleneck with many callers reaching busy signals, as well as reduced productivity and a high level of frustration for the receptionist.

With our new call processing capabilities, callers are greeted with a menu of choices and, with the touch of a button on their telephone keypad, are transferred to the appropriate areas for: financial aid, application status, minority affairs, student records or registration.

This leaves the Graduate College receptionist free to handle calls from prospective students.

We have since set up voice messaging and call processing applications which have streamlined communications throughout several departments, including Central Stores, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering College, Operations and Maintenance, the Police Training Institute, the Division of Purchasing and the State Universities Retirement System.

Word is spreading across campus like hot gossip.

Though voice messaging and call processing are the most widely used features on the system, we have discovered that voice processing can be extremely effective in the educational process.

Our foreign language department was looking for a way to improve its audio program. Students could call in on one of the department's 23 incoming telephone lines and hear a 15 minute lesson. Students could not, however, pause the tape to take notes or review a difficult section.

Students who missed a portion of the tape had to call back and start the recording from the beginning. Additionally, only one tape of each lesson was available, so quite often, students would have to call several times before gaining access to the lesson.

To enable students to pause and replay recordings, we introduced them to voice mail and began a pilot program that provides what they were looking for and then some.

Twenty-four hours a day, an automated attendant offers 17 audio lessons, each 15 minutes in length, in English, German, Japanese, French and Russian. Twenty-four students can use the system simultaneously.

Instructors issue lesson number codes. Then students access the appropriate lesson through the automated attendant by entering the codes from the keypad of a touch-tone phone. While the lesson is playing, the student can pause the recording to take notes, replay or forward through portions or replay the entire tape.

The program has been a resounding success. From Sept. 1 to Sept. 15, the language lab's automated attendant processed over 1,400 calls and significantly reduced the instances of busy signals and unavailable lessons.

We've found that there's no mystery to the successful implementation of voice processing technologies. It's just a matter of finding an experienced vendor, using common sense and keeping applications as simple as possible.

Here are a few ideas for those of you setting up or considering your own voice processing system to consider:

- Keep in mind that with any new system, you're in for some surprises – both good and bad. Take what works well and expand on it, and keep positive when something doesn't work out the way you planned.
- Determine which departments and applications should be implemented first and set goals for completion.
- Select pilot areas that are looking for improvements in their telephone system and are willing to go through some exciting changes to enhance their communications.
- In setting up each application, the number-one rule is to keep the user in mind. Listen to what they want, ask questions and check to be sure that you have all the facts. For a day, or better still, a week, have the staff keeping a running record of all incoming calls and detain how the call was handled. Assess total call volume by dividing them into categories and ranking them by priorities. Then apply the appropriate voice processing tool as necessary.
- Make sure users are properly trained. As with many other new technologies, voice processing can be very intimidating for those who don't fully understand it.
- Whenever possible, offer callers the option to "bail out" to a live person within the department. (Amazingly, when given the option, only about one or two percent of callers choose to bail out. But they appreciate knowing that if necessary or urgent, they can reach someone.)

(All aspects of voice processing, including messaging, response and touch-tone registration will be covered at ACUTA's Winter Seminar, Jan. 13-16, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.)

PARTY LINE

Ruth Michalecki
Director of Telecommunications
University of Nebraska

I am often asked how one should go about selecting a telecommunications facilities management (TFMS) product. It is a difficult question to answer because everyone has different ideas on the subject, and everyone has a slightly different telecom operation.

In my opinion, however, there are some fundamental issues one needs to look at prior to making any decision on TFMS.

Define Your Operation Clearly

- What information do you want to keep track of?
- What should the flow be?
- What are your practices and procedures?
- Are you a cost center or profit center?
- Do you need a single-user or multi-user system?
- What is the estimated size of your database?

These are more questions that need to be asked and answered up front.

Involve Staff in Planning

Encourage staff, working as a team, to brainstorm ideas and thoughts covering automation. Remember the ground rules of brainstorming, no thought or idea is considered silly. Once your staff has bought into the plan, they will work to make it succeed.

Search for Responsive Vendor

Once you have clearly defined your needs and have secured support for your plan, then look for a vendor who is willing to learn your business and is willing to be flexible in design. Your vendor should have a proven track record, provide on-going support and provide documentation.

System Features

Look for a system that is written in modules and is fully integrated, so an entry in one field automatically triggers an update in all related fields. Look for the following:

- Is it written in a portable language (across operating systems and different computers)?
- Is it easy to modify and change as your operation changes?
- Does it incorporate security measures with several layers of password authorization?
- Can the command process accommodate the novice as well as the experienced user?

A TFMS should include all the usual features such as:

- Order entry (including work request, order origination, order tracking, order status, order completion and verification)
- Maintenance activity
- Costing data (two fields, one showing what you are charging for the services)
- Circuit inventory, switch features
- Services inventory
- Bill reconciliation
- SMDR/CDR records
- Directory assistance
- Network optimization
- Module for tracking income versus expenses.

Some other features nice to have include:

- Message center automation
- Remote PABX monitoring
- Traffic engineering capabilities
- Ad-hoc sorting of data
- Project tracking
- Financial analysis
- Purchase and invoice tracking
- Statistical data from directory assistance module and others.

Don't Buy Christmas Tree

Don't be fooled into buying features. Many vendors will offer things and make promises for everything you ever wanted and more, only they are not available until third quarter next year, etc. If it isn't working now, where I can see it in full operation and kick the tires so to speak, I don't want it.

The Task is Formidable

Have an appreciation for the sheer magnitude of the task you are undertaking. You are going to have to enter every station number, every feature(s), every set, jack and location as well as every circuit on your campus. Pay phones, lease contracts, maintenance contracts and account numbers, etc., also will have to be entered.

Simply developing a system to code every department name, address and company center, every vendor or supplier and all the buildings will take more time and staff than you ever thought possible.

Before entering any data, you will have to clean up and verify all existing records. That probably means hiring someone to do a total and complete physical inventory of all your stations, equipment, circuits, wiring and cable runs.

We were most fortunate in locating a retired telco employee who had been a foreman over a crew of installers and was familiar with our campus. His advantage was the ability to recognize every piece of equipment, jack, line and circuit we had. We developed an inventory form for him to work with that duplicated our data entry screen. When we completed a building (and his inventory was verified), his working forms were given to the data entry staff.

No system is any better than the integrity of the data. "Garbage in; garbage out," is still true!

Begin with Firm Policies

Develop firm policies prior to starting this project on how you will maintain the integrity of the database. For example, how will work orders, billing activities, etc., be handled once the system is operational?

(Please continue on next page)

Party Line

(Continued from page 9)

It is so easy, for expediency, to say: "Go ahead and install this service, and we will follow up with an order when we have the time." Decide right up front, that you will not allow this to happen. Once you permit your staff (or yourself) to bypass the new automated system the first time, the next time will be easier and your TFMS efforts will fail.

Flexibility a Must

I have said this several times: You must design flexibility into your system. Your needs and your way of doing business will change many times over the next few years. Your TFMS should be flexible to accommodate those changes without having to throw out the baby with the bath water. In my opinion, I should never have to change my operation to accommodate a software package, unless I want to.

Support is a big issue with us. We want to be certain that any vendor we are doing business with has a proven track record, is willing to work with us, will make changes in the software if requested and is willing to support us all the way.

The Future

What is ahead for us and our TFMS operation? We are looking at incorporating scanning techniques in the system. We are developing a tracking system that will follow a work order request from a department through a follow-up survey to evaluate our total performance – to completion and verification.

Things like the department requisition and survey form could be scanned into the database as opposed to filing the hard copies. We would like to avoid keeping any paper records of any kind and with the increasing storage size and decreasing costs of optical discs, we believe electronic storage is a viable alternative to hard copy or microfiche storage.

We are looking at the possibility of incorporating the Auto-CAD system from the Facilities Management Department with our cable/wire/equipment inventory. We believe there are some advantages to having graphic displays showing departmental telecom systems, locations in rooms and buildings.

As areas are remodeled, the Facilities Management department will be aware of our equipment and wire facilities, and hopefully, it will result in better coordination of remodeling activities between us. In designing new buildings, we will be able to overlay our cable, conduit, riser and jack locations and needs right from the start. They will become a part of the working building design, not easily overlooked or forgotten.

This past year we developed a new student bill and a new method of registering students for long distance services. We made adjustments so the student services staff can pull up the past two or three months of actual call detail on a student's bill in case they have a question. It is easier for them than looking it up on microfiche, and it eliminates the need to retain a paper copy of the bills, which had to be filed every month. For permanent records, we do make microfilm of all the bills, but as I said earlier, we plan on using optical discs for storage in the future.

Our TFMS operation made the necessary program changes to the student services modules, and we were able to proceed without encountering any difficulties.

As I said last month, I am impressed by the number of TFMS packages available today. I am more amazed at how many telecom operations do not have any type of telecommunications facilities management system.

Speaking for our department, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to do business without ours.

ICA backs universities in FCC case

(Continued from page 5)

Frederick and Warinner has urged the agency to delay action in the matter but ultimately to consider "establishing operator services as a traffic sensitive rate element provided by local exchange carriers."

"The extraordinary level of public concern, combined with the administrative difficulty which would be associated with enforcement of complex regulations which have been mandated by Congress, warrant consideration of remedies beyond those considered by the Commission to date," the Kansas City accounting firm concluded.

While the FCC has admitted before Congress that it has been "unable to correct the problems in operator services," the measures "proposed under the Operator Services Act would establish a regulator's nightmare consisting of more of the same regulations which have proven ineffective to date," Frederick and Warinner asserted.

For the FCC to assume regulation "not only of OSPs, but of non-carrier call aggregators, such as hotels, airports, universities and hospitals" is not "a likely solution to the problem," they insisted.

The "fine-toothed regime" of the proposed regulation, "while more extensive, is not much different in substance or intent than what the Commission has already attempted unsuccessfully," the response pointed out.

Will the consumer be better served by having to review extensive written material and listening to explanations of rights, alternatives and rates? the auditors asked. Will the FCC "be able to enforce the proposed regulations against thousands of OSPs and call aggregators?"

Frederick and Warinner suggested that "the best solution to the operator services dilemma is a straightforward one: allow traditional operator service as a traffic sensitive rate element provided by local exchange carriers."

If operator assisted service is available for the LEC operator and central office, "the problems associated with non-traditional operator service providers, including customer frustration with the difficulty of placing an operator assisted call, unregulated rates and price gouging, consumer frustration and inability to ascertain information, call blocking and call splashing, would be eliminated without so much as a murmur of public complaint over the absence of competitive alternatives."

Del Combs, Executive Director

From ACUTA Headquarters

Air fares to Hawaii 'locked in'

I've got some good news for those of you hoping to attend the ACUTA Spring Seminar in Hawaii, April 5-9. Don't worry about rising air fares forcing an end to your plans.

I'm happy to report that ACUTA negotiated very favorable rates for the Hawaii trip early this year with Delta, our official airline. The contract "locked in" rates that were discounted even before the dramatic rise in fuel prices that has air fares taking another step up every few days.

We have had a good relationship with Delta over the years, and we are glad they are sticking to our contract even though the airline could possibly lose money on the deal. We can strengthen our good relationship with Delta by continuing to patronize the airline whenever we travel to an ACUTA event.

When you're ready to book your flight, this would be a good time to begin using ACUTA's official travel agency, Commonwealth Travel of Lexington, KY. Any other travel agency may be hesitant to make your reservation. Finding our Hawaii fares difficult to believe, they may think that a mistake was made in the listing.

You may call Commonwealth, toll free, at (800) 274-7135 from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET. Or you may call (606) 277-7135.

The ACUTA discount on Delta is available only by using ACUTA's code – IO-537. Commonwealth will automatically use this when you identify yourself as part of ACUTA.

Stopovers, at a cost of $60 each, are permitted in Delta's "Gateway" cities: Atlanta, Dallas/Ft. Worth; Burbank, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Oakland, Palm Springs, Santa Ana and Ontario, Calif.; Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and Seattle.

A stopover is allowed in either direction at Honolulu when continuing to/from Delta's Maui Service. A $20 fee is charged for each stopover.

Reservations and ticketing changes must be made seven days in advance. Reservations cancelled within seven days of the flight will be subject to a 10 percent penalty.

While our contract allows travel on any day, Delta divides the week into three "levels" and figures rates accordingly.

Level 1, the most favorable rate, applies to flights that depart and return Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Level 2 rates apply to flights departing and returning on Monday and Friday.

Level 3 applies to flights that depart or arrive on Saturday and Sunday.

All fares are based on Delta's "Hawaiian Zone Fares." That means your fare from a "satellite" airport will not vary greatly from the fare charged at the "hubs," such as Atlanta, Cincinnati, Dallas/Ft. Worth and Chicago.

Flights from Canada will be discounted 40 percent from Delta's regular fares.

(First fare listed is Level 1; second is Level 2; third is Level 3. These figures are "base rates" and do not include state or local taxes.)

Abilene: $598, $638, $698
Albuquerque: $508, $548, $608
Anchorage: $508, $548, $608
Atlanta: $618, $658, $718
Birmingham: $598, 638, $698
Bismark: $548, $588, $648
Boise: $508, $548, $608
Boston: $628, $668, $728
Buffalo: $588, $628, $688
Charlotte: $628, $668, $728
Chicago: $578, $618, $678
Cincinnati: $578, $618, $678
Cleveland: $628, $668, $728
Dallas/Ft. Worth: $578, $618, $678
Denver: $508, $548, $608
Detroit: $588, $628, $688
El Paso: $518, $558, $618
Greenville/Spartanburg: $628, $668, $728
Houston: $548, $588, $648
Indianapolis: $588, $628, $688
Kansas City: $548, $588, $648
Los Angeles: $368, $388, $408
Miami: $628, $668, $728
Minneapolis: $538, $578, $638
Nashville: $578, $618, $678
New Orleans: $588, $628, $688
New York: $618, $658, $718
Norfolk: $628, $668, $728
Omaha: $548, $588, $648
Orlando: $628, $668, $728
Phoenix: $448, $488, $548
Pittsburgh: $628, $668, $728
Roanoke: $628, $668, $728
San Francisco: $368, $388, $408
St. Louis: $558, $598, $658
Salt Lake City: $508, $548, $608
Seattle: $408, $428, $448

Vendor Liaison Committee holds 2nd meeting

(Continued from page 7)

Members of the panel, who also may be business competitors, asked about ways of being truly representative of all of ACUTA's corporate and individual affiliates.

"Should the members of this committee each be assigned to represent a specific portion of the corporate and individual affiliates?" it was asked.

For the time being, it was decided that the committee would continue to represent the business and education communities at large. The names of members would be prominently publicized, and all ACUTA members would be encouraged to contact any member of the committee with input or questions.

Future meetings will continue to be held in conjunction with each of ACUTA's four national events. Conference calls will be set up if an issue needed discussion in the interim.

Package links customer's computer with Centrex

(Continued from page 1)
calling party and instantly display an appropriate data file.

CompuCALL will also make it possible to transfer, simultaneously, voice and data calls between phones, or conduct three-way coordinated voice and data calls. This can be done even if phones are scattered throughout an office building or even to an employee's home phone.

At Syracuse, if a student dials 711, the campus emergency response number, to report a dormitory fire, the dispatcher taking the call will immediately know from which building the call is coming, the floor and the room. Other data may include the number of residents assigned to the room, the nearest emergency exit and any relevant medical information previously provided by the occupants.

Elise Agiolillo, Director of Telecommunications at Syracuse, explained other potential benefits of the system. "If a choking victim calls for help, even if he or she can't speak to give their location, emergency personnel will still be able to find them."

If all emergency phones on campus are busy, she added, CompuCALL can be programmed to ring at a second location.

"That way we are assured of answering any call in the quickest possible time, even if the emergency response phones on campus are tied up or for some reason we are short on office staff."

The enhancements to SU's emergency response system should be in place before the beginning of the 1991-92 school year.

CompuCALL is a breakthrough, according to the Wall Street Journal, because of its relatively low cost.

"Until now, only large corporations could get this kind of service by installing sophisticated, private network equipment," the newspaper said.

While CompuCALL is compatible only with Northern switches, the financial newspaper said that Northern would unveil hardware and software in the very near future for an automatic call distribution system, dubbed the Meridian Server, that can be installed on a central office switch from any manufacturer.

New York Telephone and Nynex's other local service division, New England Telephone, plan to offer CompuCALL to business customers in their territories as part of their tariffed Centrex services, the newspaper said.

"Earlier this year," the Journal added, "IBM announced that its CallPath software would allow its AS/400 minicomputers to talk to office phone switches (PBXs) made by Northern, ROLM and Siemens, and at some future date, AT&T's equipment."

ACUTA welcomes new members

The following joined ACUTA between Sept. 21 and Oct. 31

NORTHEAST
Paul Rowe, Hahnemann University

SOUTHEAST
Earl Savage, Washington College

MIDWEST
Judy Creech, Texas Wesleyan Univ.
Richard Huenick, Carthage College
Herm Kentopp, Concordia Univ. of Wisconsin
J. Micheal Meade, Ph.D., Henry Ford Community College
Dr. Jack L. Middendorf, Wayne State University
Steve Olsen, Taylor University
Janet Price, Kalamazoo College

WEST
James. B. Baker, Lassen College
Danny Gmelner, The Claremont Colleges

Mom and Dad can get 800 numbers

The parents of college students may now have their own 800 numbers so the kids away at school can call home without calling collect, using a credit card or receiving a bill.

MCI and US Sprint both announced personal service 800 plans in October, according to the Wall Street Journal.

"The services are targeted at parents with children in college and people in large families scattered around the country who can use an 800 number to keep in touch and avoid the higher costs of operator-assisted calls.

Customers don't have to switch their regular long-distance carrier or install special equipment," the newspaper reported.

AT&T's "Call Me" card already addresses the needs of the market being targeted by the MCI and US Sprint personal 800 service, the newspaper quoted a company spokesman.

Management

(Continued from page 6)
caught like this again."

Pottenger called TDS and found that they were developing a system for a large power and water utility that could be of interest to the university.

The department had been elevated and the staff was certainly operating on a "higher plane," Pottenger pointed out.

"Your success is directly related to your abilities to find innovative solutions, integrate diverse systems, and look first at what you already can do."

Today, Pottenger does part-time consulting and has time to operate and make crafts for her own shop in Morgantown, IN.